

FAMILY COURT — CUSTODY DISPUTES AND CHILD CONTACT SERVICES

305. Hon Colin Tincknell to the Leader of the House representing the Attorney General:

- (1) How many couples passed through the Western Australian Family Law Court in the last 12 months, and:
 - (a) of those couples, how many had children under 18 years of age;
 - (b) of those couples with children under 18 years of age, how many were involved in the Western Australian Family Law Court with custody disputes;
 - (c) of those children under 18 years of age involved in the custody disputes, how many are directed by the courts to spend equal time with both parents; and
 - (d) of those children under 18 years of age involved in the custody disputes, how many have been required to have supervised contact with one of the parents?
- (2) How many child contact services are there approved by the Family Law Court of Western Australia, and:
 - (a) what is the average cost per hour of using court approved child contact services; and
 - (b) what is the cheapest cost per hour of using court approved child contact services?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

- (1) The Attorney General is unable to provide an answer as the Family Court of Western Australia's (FCWA) case management system does not recording the following, or records them in a manner unsuited to statistical extraction:
 - (a) if the applicant and respondent were a couple;
 - (b) if a parenting matter specifically relates to a custody dispute;
 - (c) what specific orders were made by the Court.
- (2) The FCWA does not approve child contact services. Anglicare and Relationships Australia are approved by the Australian Children's Contact Association and are funded by the Federal Government. The FCWA also refers parties to reputable private agencies, primarily Perth Children's Contact Services and Safe Oasis.
 - (a)–(b) Costs vary from agency to agency and on the services provided.

Given the above questions could not be addressed the Attorney General is able to provide the following supplementary information:

- (1) The FCWA case management system is designed to capture information necessary to manage matters appropriately. The particulars of a case, including the marital status of the parties is not essential to its functionality and is not recorded.
 - (b) Similarly, the specific parenting orders sought is not needed for Casetrack to manage a matter appropriately and therefore it is not recorded.
 - (c)–(d) The specific orders made by the Court are written into a Word document and saved into Casetrack as a Word or PDF document. Given the wide variation in the wording of orders it is not possible to use these documents as a source for statistical extraction.

Furthermore, between 1 August 2016 and 31st July 2017, 1,835 Final Order applications seeking parenting orders were lodged.